

Washington - 6th District

6 Norman D. Dicks (D)

Of Bremerton — Elected 1976

Born: Dec. 16, 1940, Bremerton, Wash.
Education: U. of Wash., B.A. 1963, J.D. 1968.
Occupation: Lawyer; congressional aide.
Family: Wife, Suzanne Callison; two children.
Religion: Lutheran.
Political Career: No previous office.
Capitol Office: 2429 Rayburn Bldg. 20515; 225-5916.



In Washington: Dicks rushes into congressional action like the Rose Bowl linebacker he once was, aggressive and confident — or, some say, overaggressive and overconfident. He brought to the House habits he learned in the Senate as an aide to Warren G. Magnuson, the veteran Appropriations power, and he acts like an aspiring Magnuson, wheeling and dealing in the Appropriations committee and on the House floor.

When Dicks decides to tackle an issue, he is not overly concerned about whose side of the field it is on. He was not among the early nuclear freeze activists, for example, nor does he have a seat on the Foreign Affairs Committee, which brought the freeze resolution to the floor. But by the time the House finally passed a freeze in May 1983, after more than 40 hours of debate, Dicks had made himself a force in the negotiations.

It was his amendment, modified in last-minute talks with the more militant freeze proponents, that convinced critics to end their delaying strategy and allow a final vote on the freeze itself. The amendment specified that the freeze could eventually lapse if no progress were made toward actual reduction in nuclear weapons.

While the freeze debate was going on, Dicks was using his role on the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee to write a letter to President Reagan asking for assurances that development of the MX missile would be part of an arms control negotiating strategy and not an alternative to it. Reagan's "Dear Norm" letter giving those assurances led the subcommittee to approve MX money by a 9-3 vote in mid-May. The previous year, Dicks had lobbied against MX funding.

During the 97th Congress, Dicks found partial success in maneuvering his way through several major controversies affecting his home state and its most famous industry, Boeing.

In May of 1981 he moved quickly after the

House, considering a supplemental money bill, cast a surprise vote against the Export-Import Bank, reducing its funding to the level recommended by President Reagan.

Export-Import money is crucial to Boeing, which is crucial to Washington state, and Dicks coordinated a lobbying campaign that reversed the vote. Working with the Machinists union as well as Boeing and other companies that use the bank's money, Dicks and his allies changed enough votes to convert a 231-166 decision one day into a 237-162 vote to restore the money 24 hours later.

But his aggressive style failed the following year on a defense bill, when he tried to convince the House to buy Boeing 747 planes instead of Lockheed's C-5 for transport purposes. The Air Force had asked for the C-5, but the Senate, led by Washington's Henry M. Jackson, voted to buy the 747.

Both sides lobbied furiously in the House. Boeing advocates claimed converting the 747s from passenger to military transport use was the cheapest way to solve the problem. Lockheed backers said the 747 was too small to carry the necessary cargo. In the end, the House overwhelmingly backed the C-5, and a conference with the Senate ratified that decision.

Dicks still did not give up. Charging that Lockheed colluded with the Air Force to lobby Congress on behalf of the C-5, he asked the House to demand that the Defense Department turn over all files on the lobbying effort. The House tabled that motion after agreeing to hold hearings.

In the 96th Congress, Dicks was in the center of the battle over funding for the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), then headed by another old Magnuson hand, Michael J. Pertschuk. A majority of the House wanted to give Congress veto power over FTC regulations; Magnuson, Pertschuk and Dicks were all

Norman D. Dicks, D-Wash.

Washington 6

Maritime interests dominate the 6th, which surrounds the sinuous waterways that cut into the shores of Puget Sound and the Hood Canal. Docks, naval installations and shipbuilding centers maintain the peninsula's historic links with the sea.

The industrial city of Tacoma — which is overshadowed by its nearby rival, Seattle, and is sensitive about it — is the population center of the district with nearly one-quarter of the residents. Tacoma's fortunes follow the cycles of Boeing's aircraft business, but the city is less dependent on the huge aerospace firm than is Seattle. Commerce at the dockyards of Tacoma's deep-water port has enjoyed brisk growth. The wood-products and metal-smelting industries are also vital elements in the city's economy. The Tacoma area is the world headquarters of the Weyerhaeuser Co., although the main offices of the lumber giant are in the 8th.

Tacoma's blue-collar, heavily unionized electorate generally tilts Pierce County to

Puget Sound — Bremerton; Tacoma

centrist Democrats, although it voted Republican in the 1980 statewide contests.

Across Puget Sound from Tacoma, on the Kitsap Peninsula, is Bremerton, where shipbuilding and docking remain the backbone of local industry, and where the U.S. Navy is an important influence. The 6th is home to the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, which includes drydocks, supply depots and a refueling and refitting center for nuclear-powered aircraft carriers. Paper and wood are also central concerns. Because of the labor vote in Bremerton, surrounding Kitsap County is good territory for most statewide Democrats.

Population: 515,970. White 450,757 (87%), Black 31,621 (6%), American Indian, Eskimo and Aleut 6,896 (1%), Asian and Pacific Islander 16,587 (3%). Spanish origin 14,600 (3%). 18 and over 374,471 (73%), 65 and over 51,951 (10%). Median age: 28.

against the idea.

Dicks acted as self-appointed arbitrator, trying to bring together congressional critics of the FTC and the bluntly outspoken Pertschuk. The critics refused to let the FTC budget pass until some agreement was reached on the veto issue. The fight led to the shutdown of the agency for a day on two different occasions. Finally a compromise was reached providing for the veto but requiring a vote of both House and Senate to make it effective.

On the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, Dicks looks after the extensive Navy facilities in Bremerton in his district. He also works on military pay questions, seeking to steer money available for raises to experienced personnel rather than new recruits. "It is not the early salary levels that attract somebody into the service," he insists.

Dicks' other Appropriations assignment, the Interior Subcommittee, is the place where much of the national energy research is funded. He spent years on this panel trying to get the government to stop drilling for oil on the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska, and to allow private companies to begin.

But his attitude toward other federal land is different. When Interior Secretary James G. Watt was slow in collecting energy royalty

payments from leases on federal property, Dicks joined the Democratic chorus of complaints. He claimed that Watt threatened to campaign against him in 1982. "I should have offered him a first-class plane ticket to get him to come," Dicks said.

Later in 1981 Dicks added language to a funding bill denying permits for oil and gas exploration in three watershed areas in western Washington. He was active in the 1982 effort to ban leasing in wilderness areas.

Dicks has been a supporter of the Youth Conservation Corps (YCC), a program employing teenagers to work in national parks. Over Reagan administration objections, he inserted \$10 million for the YCC in 1982, up from \$3 million the year before. The program may eventually be melded into the American Conservation Corps, a broader program approved by the House in early 1983 that employs older, primarily disadvantaged youths.

At Home: After three years as administrative assistant to Magnuson, Dicks decided to go home in 1976 and run for Congress. He long had been planning a campaign in the 6th District for whenever incumbent Democrat Floyd Hicks chose to retire, and when Hicks was named to the state Supreme Court in 1976, Dicks began running with his usual intensity.

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He had to compete with three major candidates for the nomination: a young activist state representative, a former president of Pacific Lutheran University and the mayor of Tacoma. But Dicks' ability to tap the resources of labor and other interest groups helped him put together a winning coalition. He won the primary with 36.2 percent of the vote.

Dicks had no trouble winning against a weak Republican that fall. But he has had some difficulty making himself safe. His margin dropped from more than 90,000 votes in 1976 to less than 30,000 the next time against Republican James Beaver, a conservative law professor from Tacoma. Buoyed by financial support from the New Right, Beaver pressed him even closer in 1980, riding a statewide Republican wave to come within 17,000 votes of an upset.

After that narrow escape, Dicks took steps

to ensure that his 1982 race would not be so close. He took out full-page newspaper ads to tell voters that "Stormin' Norman" was as effective in the House as he had been on the college gridiron. "I've been back here in the district every other weekend since the '80 election," he claimed during the campaign.

While Beaver had attacked the incumbent from the right, Dicks' 1982 challenger, Republican state Sen. Ted Haley, was more liberal. Haley painted the incumbent as a profligate spender too friendly with military contractors.

But that charge just gave Dicks an excuse to talk about the pork he had brought home to the district. He claimed credit for the completion of the Tacoma Spur Highway and numerous Navy ship overhauls at Bremerton. Dicks moved toward a more secure tenure with a 63 percent victory.

Committees

Appropriations (19th of 36 Democrats)
Defense; Interior; Military Construction.

Elections

1982 General		
Norman D. Dicks (D)	89,985	(63%)
Ted Haley (R)	47,720	(33%)
1982 Primary		
Norman D. Dicks (D)	48,088	(90%)
Gus Schwartz (D)	5,439	(10%)

1980 General		
Norman D. Dicks (D)	122,903	(54%)
Jim Beaver (R)	106,236	(46%)

Previous Winning Percentages: 1978 (61%) 1976 (74%)

District Vote For President

1980		1976	
D	74,592 (36%)	D	91,991 (49%)
R	103,070 (50%)	R	88,014 (47%)
I	23,317 (11%)		

Campaign Finance

	Receipts	Receipts from PACs	Expenditures
1982			
Dicks (D)	\$293,581	\$121,920 (42%)	\$240,842
Haley (R)	\$197,517	\$12,486 (6%)	\$196,401
1980			
Dicks (D)	\$168,335	\$108,184 (64%)	\$234,650
Beaver (R)	\$171,530	\$16,965 (10%)	\$165,330

Voting Studies

Year	Presidential Support		Party Unity		Conservative Coalition	
	S	O	S	O	S	O
1982	40	53	89	8	36	63
1981	50	42	68	24	60	35
1980	74	21	81	15	44	53
1979	75	18	82	9	33	64
1978	69	24	79	16	29	64
1977	67	24	76	14	32	55

S = Support O = Opposition

Key Votes

Reagan budget proposal (1981)	N
Legal services reauthorization (1981)	Y
Disapprove sale of AWACs planes to Saudi Arabia (1981)	Y
Index income taxes (1981)	Y
Subsidize home mortgage rates (1982)	Y
Amend Constitution to require balanced budget (1982)	N
Delete MX funding (1982)	Y
Retain existing cap on congressional salaries (1982)	N
Adopt nuclear freeze (1983)	Y

Interest Group Ratings

Year	ADA	ACA	AFL-CIO	CCUS
1982	65	30	90	23
1981	50	26	80	42
1980	67	26	76	71
1979	63	4	75	22
1978	45	19	90	33
1977	50	9	90	24